

Global Connections

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Supporting SST Leaders: Our Most Valuable Resource

BY JAN BENDER SHETLER,
DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Goshen College is one of very few U.S. universities that require the equivalent of a semester of global education to graduate. Even fewer universities design all of their own programming around a common set of global learning goals and expect faculty to coordinate local lecturers, service learning and host families.

In order to carry out this 55-year-old mission, the SST office relies on faculty leaders willing to take on these challenging assignments. We recruit both teaching and administrative faculty from all areas

of campus and ask them to work outside of their academic comfort zones. They do a job that is incredibly rewarding but also one that requires a lot of preparation and organization. They may get to travel and see new places, but they are also responsible for putting together an academic program, connecting with service partners and host families and guiding students in unpredictable circumstances. Our faculty are heroes! Without faculty stepping up to this role, we could not have an SST program.

Much of the work we have done over the past four years to improve the SST program has focused on connecting all students to the program. Now we want to focus on faculty support. We have identified a number of areas where faculty feel underprepared. They report that they

lack confidence and are stressed by their leadership role in areas such as language skills, preparation time and curriculum planning.

This year, we were grateful to receive a two-year grant from the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program (UISFL) of the U.S. Department of Education that will enable us to address these concerns. The grant, which is called “Equipping Scholars for Globally Engaged Learning,” funds a number of benefits:

- summer immersive language and cultural study in the location in which faculty will be leading,
- a course release the semester before they lead,
- an SST Curriculum Development Institute the summer before they lead,
- and a visiting global scholar to teach language courses such as Indonesian or Swahili to SST students and to continue to tutor faculty in the language.

The grant also provides support for faculty and student orientation.

This summer, five semester leaders traveled to Senegal, Ecuador or Indonesia for immersive language and cultural study along with orientation to the program. In addition, two shorter term immersions were made possible in Northern Ireland and the Navajo and Hopi Nations. Cristobal Garza Gonzalez, a Spanish professor who will lead two Ecuador units in 2023-24, returned from his time on location feeling more confident.

“This program can be greatly successful. Mishaps, mistakes, unforeseeable challenges, and confusion can be overcome and are part



Ecuador SST leaders, 2023-24: Tillie Yoder, SST resident director, and Cristobal Garza Gonzalez, faculty leader, left and right foreground, in Mindo, Ecuador, preparing for their respective roles. They are with May-Summer SSTers Alex Neufled and Kaylie Gaby (left) and current leaders Ruth and Andrew Hartzler (right), 22-23.

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Senegal SST leaders, 2023-24: Left to right, Rachel Versluis, SST resident director and Neil Detweiler, faculty leader, visiting the Beersheba Project, Sandiara, Senegal, a former SST service site. They are with Yacine Diatta, local coordinator, a representative of Beersheba and former SST leader David Lind.

of the learning process for both students and faculty. I am very happy and grateful for the opportunity,” he said.

Susan Setiawan, who will lead the spring Indonesia SST unit, reports that the six weeks she spent there this summer advanced her language and cultural skills. “I am comfortable using Bahasa Indonesian while traveling on public transportation, ordering at a restaurant, in general conversations with people, and while shopping in a store,” she said.

Neil Detweiler, biology, returned from Senegal excited about possible service locations after meeting with local businesses and nonprofits. He was able to bring back samples of some of their products to show students.

Goshen College’s faculty-led programs are unique in that all SST courses have a specific set of outcomes: cultural competence, civic engagement, self-reflection, and insight into systemic issues of global concern. Those qualities can be hard to define, and we continue to explore ways to teach and assess them.

In June, the SST Course Development Institute hosted 10 faculty leaders preparing for SST experiences ranging from semesters abroad to local global studies courses. They

learned about the theory and application of transformative learning sparked by “disorienting dilemmas,” and engaged in rigorous conversation with their peers as they designed their own SST courses with our end goals in mind. Academic Success Director, Michelle Blank, led the workshop and also shared the digital library of curricular resources for SST that she has developed. Kendra Yoder and Jan Shetler from the Global Education Office also assisted in organizing and presenting at the institute.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus, who teaches a course for the Global Health and Inequality thread, participated in the Institute.

“Even though I’ve taught in the old SST alt framework for years, I now feel as though I am part of the SST team,” she remarked.

We believe that with good support, our faculty will be excited to embrace SST leadership as a significant part of their scholarly and professional development. As our experienced SST leaders move toward retirement, we are developing strong leadership skills in our younger professors. They will continue Goshen College’s longstanding emphasis on global citizenship by bringing global learning back to their own departments and to the broader campus ethos. 🌍

UPCOMING SST UNITS & LEADERS

SST SEMESTERS, 2023-2024

Ecuador

with Cristobal Garza Gonzalez and Tillie Yoder

Indonesia

with Susan and Ben Setiawan

Senegal

with Neil Detweiler and Rachel Versluis

SHORT TERM SST, TRAVEL LOCATIONS:

The Amazon

with Jerrell Ross Richer

A disaster site in the U.S.

with Luke Beck Kreider

Guatemala

with Rob Brenneman

Chicago and Elkhart County

with Philipp Gollner

United Kingdom, London

with Peter Miller

Northern Ireland

with Jessica Baldanzi

STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIPS

GILMAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Billy Easton, Tanzania, spring 2023

Irish Cortez, April Pollack,

Sofia Sanchez, UK, May Term 2023

Orlando Aguirre-Mulatto, Ecuador, spring 2023

THE GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

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Director of Global Engagement

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Kendra Yoder, *Assistant Director of Global Education*

Ann Vendrely, *Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean*

SST as a Discovery of Heritage

BY JENNIFER SCHROCK

An increasing number of Goshen College students join an SST course or semester as a way of exploring their own heritage. While some students prefer an adventure in a culture as different as possible from their own, others welcome the chance to deepen their understanding of their own backgrounds.

Billy Gene Easton II, an African-American who returned to college in his 40s, was thrilled when he learned he could spend the spring of 2023 in Tanzania through the SST program. Easton has reflected on his African-American heritage at length and had a lifelong desire to visit Africa.

“For me as an African-American, to go back home was a profound experience—very spiritual. I saw that I was an African from a beautiful place and a beautiful culture that is the cradle of humanity. Africa is a very healing place.” Easton said. His sense of “coming home” increased when he realized that a number of his U.S. family members have names similar to Swahili words. He suspects he may have genetic roots in East Africa, since slaves were shipped to the Americas from both East and West Africa.



Billy Easton, far left, teaching English at Dr. Ali Jumaa Secondary School, Kemgesi, Tanzania, during his SST service assignment.

Easton was intrigued to interact with African people whose ancestors had not experienced the trauma of slavery.

“To see Africans owning their own land, working on their land; to see them as stewards of the land and the community was profound. In my history, we worked other people’s land,” Easton explained. He would like to have been able to visit Africa as a child in order to have been shaped by this experience earlier.

The SST unit also visited Tanzanian slave ports such as Bagamoyo. This was painful for Billy, but Tanzanian people taught him how they dealt with injustice. In one memorable conversation, he asked someone he’d met how Africans felt about an injustice.

“We choose peace, brotherhood and love and we’re okay with the consequences of that,” was the response he received. Easton had never heard someone say that before, and it struck him.

“We’ve inherited painful memories, but we all have the choice to be free. You’re free! No one’s lived better than you have. We need to recognize that we are the result of horrible things that occurred that people cannot get justice for. The only justice we can do for our ancestors is to value each other and to heal,” Easton said.

Puerto Rican Identities, a recent May Term course in the sequential SST thread, Hispanic Identities, filled up a year in advance largely because it appealed to Latinx students. Isis Espinoza, a fourth-year TESOL and education major who grew up among Puerto Rican friends and family members, was pleased to learn there was an SST course in Puerto Rico. Experiencing Puerto Rican food, language and community first hand rather than through others was a powerful experience for her.

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Director of Global Education to Retire

It is with sadness that we announce that Jan Bender Shetler has decided to retire at the end of this academic year (June 2024).

Since her appointment to the director position in 2019, Jan led an institution-wide review of the Study Service Term (SST) and introduced thoughtful changes. The introduction of new domestic locations and the “one course at a time” format has allowed more students to have meaningful cross-cultural experiences. She has garnered federal grant support for SST and

presented at conferences about the program. In 2023 she established the Institute for Indonesian Academic Partnerships to solidify our relationships in Indonesia. We are so grateful for her leadership for these five years.

Dr. Shetler will continue to lead the Global Engagement Office this academic year as we begin searching for her replacement. It will be difficult to replace her deep knowledge of the SST program and passion for cross-cultural learning.

—Ann Vendrely, *academic dean*

DONATE TO SST: OPTIONS

SST Annual Fund: Assists with travel and administrative costs for off-campus immersive education.

SST Scholarship Fund: supports students who otherwise would not be able to choose a semester SST or travel course to fulfill their SST requirements.

SST Endowment Fund: In the future, will continue vital benefits such as preparation time for faculty leaders after grant funding expires.

To learn more, contact advancement@goshen.edu or call 574-535-7564.

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“I’ve always struggled with my sense of identity growing up in a primarily white environment. It was hard to feel proud of who I was. This trip helped me know who I am, regardless of what other people think about Puerto Rican people. I’m proud of the people who came before me.”

A highlight for Espinoza was spending Mother’s Day with four generations of her Puerto Rican host family and seeing their warmth and care for each other.

Students in the Navajo and Hopi Nations SST unit who had Mexican roots were surprised and honored when Navajo people greeted them as part of the Mexican Navajo clan. They were not regarded as “Belagana,” or white people but as part of the Navajo clan from Mexico.

“It helped us have a deeper experience; they were more comfortable talking to us,” Areli Guzman, a second-year biochemistry major, said.

Currently, Easton and Arleth Martin, a junior sociology major whose SST experience was also in Arizona, are promoting the SST program with their African-American and Latinx peers. 🌍



IIAP at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, right to left: Susan Setiawan, SST faculty leader, Goshen College, Florentina Galuh, IIAP Executive Assistant, Stephannie Maay, IIAP Project Manager, Les Redfern, IIAP Director, Erlin Mali, IIAP Assistant Director, Jan Bender Shetler, Director of Global Engagement, Goshen College.

Introducing the Institute for Indonesian Academic Partnerships

Goshen College is collaborating with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. to launch the new Institute for Indonesian Academic Partnerships (IIAP). The objective is to foster reciprocal partnerships that build understanding and peace between Anabaptist higher education institutions, other U.S. universities, Indonesian higher education institutions and Indonesian nonprofits.

Areas of focus will include peace and reconciliation, interfaith dialogue and cooperation, environmental sustainability, ecological restoration, community health and development, and social entrepreneurship. As part of this, the IIAP is facilitating partnerships for our SST study content and service in Indonesia.